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ABSTRACT

The relationship between assistant principals' orientation process and career mobility is examined in this qualitative study, based on the assumption that the assistant principalship is a testing and an opportunity position for both the candidate and the organization. Methodology involved formal and informal interviews with 20 secondary school assistant principals and their colleagues, direct observation, and document analysis. Factors for career mobility were identified; these include school and district norms, relationships with colleagues, career timing and planning, degree of risk-taking ability, and personal drive. The typology provides a framework for viewing the career orientation of assistant principals and the factors influencing their careers and also identifies four emerging themes: organizational influence, site level, the principal, and personal responses. A recommendation is made for using the typology as a basis for structuring recruitment, training, selection, support, and organizational assessment practices. Two tables and one figure are included. (38 references) (LMI)

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A Typology of the Assistant Principalship: A Model of Orientation to the Administrative Career

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A Typology of the Assistant Principalship: A Model of Orientation to the Administrative Career

The assistant principalship is a major recruitment position for the principalship and for other administrative career positions. Austin and Brown documented in 1970 that over 80% of assistant principals aspire to the principalship or beyond. All recent evidence shows that most current principals' administrative careers began in the assistantship (Gaertner, 1979; Greenfield, 1985). This article focuses on that entry position where administrators' orientations to the career are shaped.

Many recent studies of educator's roles have focused on their duties, tasks, and the degree of satisfaction the particular administrative position allows. Considerable research details the daily tasks of principals and superintendents and even assistant principals (Austin and Brown, 1970; Salley, et al., 1979; Black, 1980; Reed & Himmler, 1985). The literature has documented that educators develop different orientations (e.g. cosmopolitan or local) to their roles and different responses to the organizational socialization they undergo (Gouldner, 1978; Marshall 1979; Carlson, 1962; Marshall and Greenfield, 1985) but there has been little effort to explore administrators adjust to and advance in careers in educational administration. The importance of mentoring and sponsorship (Ortiz, 1982) and the process of "getting the attention of superiors" (Griffiths, Goldman, and McFarland, 1965) have been identified. Career patterns for administrators have been identified (Gaertner, 1979) but have not been connected to the

way one's orientation to the career develops and how that orientation affects career mobility. Does one's socialization into school administration affect the way one performs on the job and moves ahead in administration?

This research examined what took place in assistant principals' socialization. It assumed that the assistant principalship is a testing and an opportunity position for both the candidate and the organization (Gaertner, 1979; Kanter, 1977; Marshall, 1985). The candidate has the opportunity to develop and display skills and demonstrate the ability to withstand stress and to learn the essential tasks of the school administrator. At the same time the organization undergoes testing by the candidate (Schein, 1978). The assistant principal feels out the organization, asking: does the organization allow me to take risks and to learn from mistakes or is there no chance of movement after one mistake? Am I given tasks that expand, or tasks that limit my capacities? Are the things that the organization sees as important, important to me? And how much of my time and self do I want to give up? This article examines these questions and presents a typology that describes career adjustments made within the daily realities of the assistant principal's job.

Methodology

In a team effort, a coordinator and four researchers employed field study methodology to collect data about the enculturation or socialization of secondary school assistant principals (hereinafter called the AP and used synonymously with vice principal) from twenty subjects, in eleven school districts,

in three states. The districts were urban, rural and suburban. The urban category includes one large city and two smaller cities. Eighteen subjects were visited on-site and two subjects were interviewed off-site.

The team selected subjects to insure a cross-section of APs by experience and racial and ethnic background. In the sample, women subjects outnumbered their male counterparts to help focus on gender. In the twenty sites there were 39 APs; twenty-six were male. In six of the twenty sites there were no women in administrative positions.

To facilitate access, the team accepted a limitation on this study. Because the research subjects agreed to be shadowed on the job, the researchers proceeded on the assumption that the most self-confident individuals would allow themselves to be observed and interviewed. Thus it is likely the sample is peopled by more women and men who perceive themselves as performing their jobs well than there may be in the general assistant principal population. Subjects' superiors had to approve entry into their districts as well.

Site visits included formal and informal interviewing of subjects and their colleagues, direct observation of people and events (referred to here as shadowing), examination of documents and structured observation that included recording the amount of time each AP spent in each interaction (Mintzberg, 1973). This triangulation allowed the researchers to explore deeply the connections between what the subjects said and what they did. The researchers initially explored a wide range of issues involving assistant principals and then became more focused as

relevant relationships and patterns in behaviors emerged (McCall and Simmons, 1969; Wilson, 1977; Spradley, 1979).

Subjects were shadowed for periods of four to seven days, and, wherever possible, the on-site observation was spread out over two different parts of the school year to account for different types of activities during the year and the possibility of different behaviors during these times. Follow-up interviews were conducted.

The researchers finally focused on the following issues: 1) the importance of the discipline function in career advancement, 2) the importance of the instructional leadership function in relation to job satisfaction and mobility, 3) experiences of men and women in seeking administrative positions, and 4) ways men and women conceptualize and approach the work of the assistant principal.

The research team met on a bi-weekly basis for two years to raise questions about the data and develop methods for managing and analyzing shared, multi-site case studies. Analytic memos and "request for data" files were used to get team members to follow up on emerging patterns (Miles and Huberman, 1984; Schatzman and Strauss, 1973). On-going team data analysis of the twenty case studies led to the development of a typology of career orientations that we hope begins movement toward building a grounded theory of career adjustment in schools (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

The following case studies illustrate the various ways in which APs manage their work and adjust to the tasks and pressures

that come with the job. The names of all subjects, schools and school districts are fictitious to protect confidentiality.

Case Studies in the Formation of Career Orientations of Assistant Principals

This section presents themes from the twenty case studies. Each AP formed a view of his/her fit in the position or in other positions and this in turn affected the response to the organization and to the people in it.

Perception of Opportunity

Most APs in this study perceived the position to be a transitional one in which to learn skills and prove oneself on first entering the job. Doris Schroeder, Martin Jameson, Ellen Carson, and Susan Rafferty had clear visions of where they wanted to move in the future and each set up a plan for systematically demonstrating and learning as many skills as they could in school administration. Some subjects failed to grasp opportunities while others opted out of the running.

Doris Schroeder taught high school in a district that was cutting back on personnel and closing schools. As president of her district's teachers' organization, she was asked by her superintendent to head a task force on reorganization of the district. As a result of the task force's recommendations the district replaced a junior high school with a middle school and opened up two assistant principalships. Doris saw an opportunity and applied. She received coaching for her examination/interview from a woman who was then deputy superintendent, and got the job. She formed an informal "women's locker room" with several other

women in the district as a form of networking. She had some initial difficulties with disciplining students at the middle school age, and she had to fight to maintain a role in disciplining children. She asserted that she knew she needed to show she could control children in order to be a viable principal candidate. When her male colleague tried to assume all discipline duties, she protested, and she was, in time, able to demonstrate that she could discipline students.

Ms. Schroeder took on every job she could: responsibility for interdisciplinary curriculum, rostering, budget, the summer school principalship and special projects to demonstrate her competence. During this time, however, the district leadership changed. She applied for an elementary principalship which she did not receive, but she expected eventually to become a principal or assistant superintendent in her district or a nearby district.

Joan Dixon was coached by an assistant superintendent to apply and prepare for a district-wide supervisory position after teaching for seven years. She grasped this opportunity, and later sought an AP position on the advice of her mentor. She took on as many tasks as she could, even chairing district committees during a sabbatical year.

Martin Jameson had a "game plan" for his advancement up the career ladder. He planned to spend three years in teaching and then move to administration. He did just that as a disciplinarian. After three more years, he sought a promotion from the assistant principalship to principal. He had a clear understanding of the local politics of his own district, so he

had also applied in other districts. When he did not get the principalship of his high school or middle school, he accepted a principal/ superintendent position in another small district. Then, three years later he moved to a larger district as superintendent.

Ellen Carson took on any new task before taking the examination for the high school and middle school principalship. She said, "my conscience would bother me if I took a principalship and I wasn't really prepared." Nevertheless, she placed herself in the running by taking these examinations after being an AP for two-and-one-half years.

On the other hand, William Russell, an AP for 13 years and in charge of his high school's annex, said "there is nothing more I can learn in the position. Now I am afraid I'm stuck." Although he was on his district's principal list, he did not apply when the opportunity was there.

Passing the Loyalty Test

APs often face career dilemmas over and above the daily tasks they are expected to complete. They are faced with moral and ethical choices that demand decisions that affect their careers. Failure to observe loyalty norms constitutes a social error (Bosk, 1979) that may be unforgivable and disqualify an AP for upward mobility. Loyalty errors include failure to support one's boss, defiance of district orders or publicly questioning one's superiors.

Katherine Rhoads was "placed at one of the roughest schools" and expected that if she showed she had the "right stuff" in her job performance and could "go along" with the administrative

group, she would get a principalship. During the research she was in the throes of a great career dilemma. She had challenged her district's test answers after having failed a principal-level examination. A legal challenge would mean that the district would have to give a reexamination or regrade every exam. She received advice from several principals that she should not persist in this challenge, for she would be seen as a troublemaker. If she forced the issue out of conscience, she was advised that she would still not be considered for a principalship. She decided to drop the challenge.

Elizabeth Anderson openly defied her principal on a variety of issues, and she could often be heard above the normal din of the outer office arguing with her boss. David Greenberg openly criticized his superintendent over an administrative salary issue. His attack on the superintendent was personal, and he was told by his Administrators' Association president to retract his comments.

A vignette from Alexis Clark's first year as an assistant principal demonstrated how important a cooperative relationship between the AP and principal could be. A junior high school pupil, Anthony, was always in trouble but was in the process of achieving a turn-around. His work and attitude had changed so that in a three-month period he went from failure to earning As and Bs. One day, however, Ms. Clark observed a security guard provoke Anthony into a physical dispute. She related:

> Classes were passing in the hall. The guard saw Anthony and made a derogatory remark to him. The boy kept on walking. The guard called him back, insulted him again and pushed him up against the wall. Anthony pulled back and socked the guard, knocking him out cold. The guard reported this as a

> violent student attack and my principal suspended Anthony and submitted a discipline transfer on the boy.

Ms. Clark explained to her principal what had happened and reported that she was going to write a negative personnel report on the guard. Her principal said that if she did so, he would submit a negative report on her. Alexis wanted a promotion and couldn't afford to have a damaging personnel incident of defiance of her principal in her file. She knew she was at odds philosophically with this military-oriented principal about discipline decisions and that she did not have his respect (because she was female and could not "jump into a fight and physically break it up"). Alexis went to a friend in the district office who facilitated the boy's transfer for other than disciplinary reasons. Alexis then dropped her complaint. If she had been forced to carry on this dispute with the principal for ethical reasons, her mobility could have been blocked.

Martin Jameson's Whitman School District was rife with conflict, and he lost his chance to become principal of his high school by ignoring the superintendent's social demand that he join his pet service club. Martin explained his beliefs:

> I try to be as fair as possible and try to keep an emotional low key, avoid conflict without compromising too much. That's the best way to your goal . . . . As assistant principal you deal with all the competing interests in the school. Where there is conflict or misunderstanding, no one is happy in the resolution of problems.

He was uncomfortable playing a political game that could undermine the principal, and he wanted to remain independent and socially neutral in his small, rural community. The superintendent wanted an ally in the principal's position. When James Armstrong, the high school principal, was demoted to the

middle school principalship after 8 years at the high school, Martin was a favorite candidate of teachers and community. He had already been promoted to a twelve-month AP position. He still declined to join the superintendent's club. Informants reported that this signaled to the superintendent that Martin was not going to be manipulated. Martin did not get the job. However, he was attuned to the political situation and had developed a regional network while in graduate school. He knew that if he did not become principal this time, he would be stuck or plateaued in this district. Thus, he applied elsewhere at the same time he was being considered at Whitman, and he accepted a position as principal/superintendent in another district.

Sponsorship

Administrative careers develop in a sponsored mobility system (Turner, 1960, Marshall, 1979, Valverde, 1980; Ortiz, 1982). Sponsorship offers informal support, training, and an affective bond which assures the protege the visibility, advice and career direction needed to build a successful administrative career. Selections from several cases serve to illustrate how sponsorship can influence career outcomes.

Joan Dixon's assistant superintendent encouraged her to take administrative courses and to try for a variety of different jobs. With his advice and counsel she moved into a language arts advisory position for a year and then into a high school vice principalship. She was aware of the importance of this sponsor and pursued this relationship with others as well. She indicated:

> I did have a talk with the superintendent the other day. I have done work for the office while on my sabbatical....I am also staying on the district advisory groups which give me good visibility. I get along well with the superintendent. I told him I was thinking about applying in other districts. He told me he sees me as the principal of the other high school in the district. He also mentioned possible middle school openings. He told me he would recommend me highly to any district in which I applied.

Elaine Jones was perceived by many faculty members as an affirmative action appointment to a mainly white magnet school. Formally, she supervised the disposition of the school's more serious discipline problems. Informally, however, Black students sought her out for counseling and advice with interpersonal problems. She often diffused the anger of Black students and possibly diverted what could have become racial incidents by listening to and advising students. But she was not invited into the white-male-controlled administrative circle of the school. Without site-based support and, as a woman and a Black, she felt like and acted like an outsider. She spent so much time on minority student problems that many teachers viewed her as inefficient and as unable to meet the other demands of her job. What she did with the minority students at the school appeared to be undervalued.

David Greenberg at Robert Frost High School wanted a principalship. He had applied and had been by-passed on several occasions. He expressed his discouragement with the selection process and his dissatisfaction with some of the administrators he saw in action. At times he was vocal about this. David's principal, Dr. Fergusson recognized his value as an administrator who had good ideas and knew how to move an idea from its incipient stages into a full-fledged program. He handled

discipline well. He was fair, and students liked him. He supported a rigorous curriculum. Unlike Dr. Fergusson who emphasized positive social activities for the students at this school that people often called a "hellhole," Mr. Greenberg expressed a negative view of schooling's effects on children and a negative view of teachers. In the minds of many teachers at Frost, he was a failure in interpersonal skills.

Mr. Greenberg tried to develop a sponsor/protege relationship with a few higher administrators, but he was unable to gain an active sponsor because at times it appeared that he did not ardently support the values of an urban school district that was trying to convince clients and teachers that they could succeed. He complained:

> You give up after a while, or you just don't want the hassle, the ultimate responsibility. . . . I was anxious for a promotion to principal. But this system, the American system, is not going to support inner-city schools. I know people with money--they don't care about these kids. . . . Reagan has no sensitivity to the problems here. We have a good superintendent who says we're responsible. But to function in an environment where no one cares but us--why take on the burden? I like the kids and they like me, but I don't see much hope in the total world. Do businesses really want Black people to move up in society? I see the potential in kids but in reality, society wants things the way they are. Capitalist society is based on having working people. Society allows us to pick a few to succeed. Yet the superintendent is there cheering us all on; but I have to survive. Power and money don't give a damn. That's why I'm not sure I want to be a principal. The physical plant is falling apart. Do I want the ultimate responsibility for this? . . . Would I want to be a superintendent? . . . The real dream for me is to have money and to have some representative outcome for all the input.

Ellen Carson worked in the same district. She said, "I'm excited about the new challenges, new acquaintances and new knowledge" she would experience when she was assigned to anothe. school the next year. As a new AP at Longfellow, a model

academic school, she took on tasks with enthusiasm and demonstrated her ability to accomplish her principal's goals. She was willing to risk initiating new site policies that were unpopular with teachers but facilitated improved record keeping on students. She made herself available to teachers to listen to their problems and to provide access to resources for them. She also joined and became active in highly visible educators' organizations. She and her principal developed a trusting relationship almost immediately. Dr. Perkins was a new principal only two months before Ms. Carson was assigned to Longfellow High. The second vice principal had been a rival candidate for the hotly-contested principalship of the school and demonstrated uncooperativeness early in Dr. Perkins' tenure. Thus, Dr. Perkins came to rely on Ellen and to give her wide discretion. When she left Longfellow, Dr. Perkins gave her a glowing official commendation in her personnel record.

In the cases of these two urban assistant principals, although each of their principals relied heavily on their talents and efforts, the responses of Dr. Fergusson and Dr. Perkins to the career aspirations of their assistants were vastly different. Both principals praised the work of their assistants. Dr. Perkins openly supported Ms. Carson in public and encouraged her to take the examination for the principalship notwithstanding her short tenure in the vice principal position. Dr. Fergusson praised Mr. Greenberg but did not act as a mentor for him.

The absence of sponsorship can have a negative affect on one's orientation to the career. George Tiempo was the only Hispanic administrator in his district and had been responsible

for ederal grants and bilingual programs in his small city district. Although he had a doctorate and felt overqualified as an AP, his principal supported another assistant in his school for a principalship. Tiempo then applied for another vacant principalship in his district and was unsuccessful. He had no apparent support from any sponsors during the observation. His aspirations were so frustrated in his district that he considered leaving the education field. Dr. Tiempo also had another successful career as a financial consultant.

Settling into the Assistant Principalship

Those assistant principals who were comfortable in the AP position admitted two things: they made conscious decisions to put their families first and to reject the time commitment incurred by the principalship. Rejection of the principal role included the self-knowledge that these APs were not interested in performing the politician role of the principal. Althea Gibsen in Tyus High School revealed, "This may be a cop-out or insecurity on my part, but the smallness of the community makes it (the principalship) difficult. I don't know if I could hold up under the pressure."

Virgil Jones was accustomed to putting in long hours and many evenings, but after several years of this, he decided:

> I realized that, hey, I'm becoming a one-dimensional person. I eat, sleep and drink education .... One day about a year ago, I woke up and realized that my daughter was gone .... I'm not going to allow this to happen to my next two children. I'm going to devote more of my life and time to my family. I want to leave school with a clean conscience that I have given a full measure of what I have to offer, then I want to be a lot of other things ... To do justice to the job of being principal, one has to give up a lot of other things. At this point I'm not willing to give up my family ... My ego does not demand that I be a principal, but

> (it does demand) that I see the fruits of my labor ... (I know) I grow and I make something better here. There is no monetary incentive to be a principal. I'm comfortable here ... I've gotten involved with organizations outside of education.

Ralph Long is an example of an AP who found the right niche because the job contained responsibilities exactly suited for his talents and preferences. After returning to the United States from a prestigious position in education abroad, he held several posts in administration with minimal satisfaction. The position he took at Upper Devon was "ideally suited to me because it had to do primarily with curriculum and not discipline." He became the highly respected instructional leader of his high school. Dr. Long retired recently from this position.

Alexis Clark said:

> I've never applied for the principalship mainly because I'm very pleased with my situation here. I like it; it's comfortable; I have the flexibility that keeps me creative and at ease.

Ms. Clark aspired to move to a central office position where she could use her administrative and counseling experience. She described the job of AP as physically and emotionally stressful because the "vice principals run the schools day-to-day." She thought that health problems would keep her out of the principalship; however, she assumed the acting principalship of her large inner-city high school and then later became building administrator of a special program annex at another large high school.

Donna DeVerona at Olympia High School, although she did apply for a principalship, felt comfortable in her position as AP. She said:

> I really didn't think about my move into administration; it was thought out for me. . . . I just can't imagine myself at another school . . . everything is known here and I have a fear of the unknown.

Table 1 shows that only 4 of the 20 subjects (20%) desired to remain in the assistant principalship. (This is slightly higher than Austin and Brown's finding in 1970.) Three of the four subjects were men who opted for control of their time and the satisfaction of being assigned preferred tasks in schools they liked. The one woman, who defined herself as in a career position, wanted time for her family, liked the way the job fit with her personality, and rejected the pressures and time demands of the principalship.

A striking finding is that a large percentage of the men (43%) elected to remain in the assistant principalship and that only one of the thirteen women (8%) selected that position as her final career goal. We believe this is skewed from the general AP population because the subjects were not randomly selected. Among the women who entered the administrative career in line positions, four (31%) aspired to move to central offices staff positions away from line positions.[1] None of the men expressed any desire to take this career direction. In fact, George Tiempo who was in a bilingual staff position moved to an AP position in order to be better placed for a move to a principalship.

Gender as a Factor

Important differences in gender treatment at the work site and in gaining sponsorship emerged as women talked about their careers and relationships with colleagues and teachers. Jean King and Carole Mann were told outright by superintendents that

women were not considered for principalships in their districts. Jean King, then, seeing her assistant principalship as a dead end, moved to another district and in two years became a high school principal. Carol Mann outlasted her superintendent, gained another sponsor, and became a principal after devoting thirty-six years of her professional life to education. Alexis Clark was told by one of her principals:

> I don't think a woman ever should be made an administrator because women were designed for other purposes .... I would never respect a woman as a leader.

Elizabeth Anderson was told by an associate superintendent that she was their "principal maker," but she would never become a principal. She believed that the time she applied for advancement was a period of promotional opportunities for Black men. Gladys Simpson who also applied for the principalship during the early 1970s and in the 1980s expressed the same belief. Joan Dixon was denied the salary increase other vice principals received because she had taken a maternity sabbatical. Katherine Rhoads was subjected to verbal sexual harrassment by both her principal and colleague AP. Elaine Jones, a Black female appointed to a white male administrative team was not invited onto the informal team as a trusted colleague. She felt like a token and got little advice. Susan Rafferty, the youngest subject, had sponsorship but felt that she experienced "harder testing" from faculty because she was a woman and young. Both Ellen Carson and Doris Schroeder related stories of their male colleague APs trying to undermine their authority and of male teachers unwilling to take direction from them as women.

Forty-six percent of the women in this study encountered principals or superintendents who would not allow them access to training or mobility either as teachers or administrators. If these men also blocked access to administrative positions for other women, it is impossible to know how many potential school administrators were unable to serve their children or their communities. This study sought out women administrators; however, in six of the twenty school sites there were no women in site level administrative positions. We cannot know what barriers there were for women in those districts and sites. Yet, if we generalize the experience of these subjects to the entire pool of administrative aspirants, it is possible that almost half of the women who seek to enter administration experience some form of serious blockage to their careers.

The following section builds upon these themes from the cases to identify common characteristics (types) and patterns of career adjustments that emerged from the subjects' stories.

The Typology of Orientation to the Assistant Principalship

Although all of the assistant principals experienced similar work tasks, their careers moved in different directions. Data analysis showed that these distinctions among APs could be sorted into some specific career types. From comparative analysis of the 20 APs, a typology of adjustment to the administrative career was developed.[1]

Each career orientation in the typology has implications for administrative mobility and has value in predicting outcomes in an aspirant's career. This is, however, a profile, and the presence of these descriptive conditions is not the crucial

determinant of the career outcome; the specific interactions of the individual and the organization determine that.

Five different AP career patterns were identified: upwardly mobile, career, plateaued, shafted, and considering leaving. The next sections describe the typology categories. Table One displays the critical background data on each subject, and Figure One displays the career influences and outcomes for APs.

The data showed that the upwardly mobile person had specific work and attitude differences from the assistant principal who was plateaued or who was considering leaving the field of education.

The Upwardly Mobile Assistant Principal

A profile of an upwardly mobile assistant principal (or UM) includes an age range from the late 20s to the mid-40s. The subjects had from 3 to over 20 years teaching experience. Women may have spent as much as or more than 10 additional years as teachers than the men.[1] The upwardly mobile person has a sponsor or mentor who was acquired during the teaching career or while an assistant principal. The sponsor has influence and has consistently promoted the interests of the aspirant. In urban areas, this kind of support could come from a group such as a fraternity or ethnic or religious organization as well as from an individual.

The upwardly mobile has developed a highly useful and active network of acquaintances and colleagues at levels above the school site level, works in professional associations, and has participated on task forces or committees involving key district policy deliberations. The aspirant understands and can

manipulate political situations to his/her advantage, and he/she has not become aligned with known losers. The aspirant makes it very clear that he/she desires a higher position and will actively pursue administrative advancement.

The UM also has learned to practice limited risk taking (LRT). Limited risk taking involves actions on the part of the AP that seek to: expand and control the limits of the position, test leadership and interpersonal skills, or improve on a school procedure without risking a major error that could result in one's career being plateaued (Mitchell, 1987) . LRT is political action. The UM is able to sort and select problems to work on that will have positive career impact if successful but that will not incur negative sanctions if unsuccessful.

Physically, the UM fits the district's image of an administrator. The person dresses appropriately and has a physical or personal presence that is commanding.

Any task that is put before upwardly mobile assistant principals is completed to the satisfaction of superiors. They meet or exceed task expectations, and they ensure that their task management is noticed. They know they must prove that the discipline function can be handled before they will receive a line promotion. (Note Schroeder's experiences, pp. 5-6.) They know they must demonstrate that they can exercise a role of authority in supervising teachers, in disciplining them and in providing instructional assistance. They assertively position themselves to have these responsibilities and visibly demonstrate them. They know that crisis management is an everyday part of the assistant principal's job, that they must maintain an image

of calmness and control in the face of crisis and project an image of planning to ensure orderliness and follow-through (Marshall and Greenfield, 1985; Marshall, 1985).

Upwardly mobile APs know they must avoid defiance of superiors or of the organization and exhibit a strong identity with the prevailing values of the organization. They must be loyal and demonstrate a willingness to take risks that could lead to success in an innovative program or in correction of a problem.

The time spent as an AP is also a factor. Upwardly mobile APs cannot afford to become complacent in the current job role. The UM subjects in this research spent 3 to 10 years in the position. Women, most of whom worked longer as teachers than their male colleagues, (See Table 1) often have to act more rapidly than men once they reach the assistant principalship since age may become a factor in seeking the higher position. All of the women who aspired to the principalship in this study, except Mann, declared early on in the AP role that they wanted promotions.

The Career Assistant Principal

The career AP does not want to be a principal. High job satisfaction is associated with this orientation. The career assistant has created a pleasant situation for him or herself with preferred task assignments, good relations with the site administrator, and enough authority, autonomy, and participation in decision making on site to describe the position with pride. Although the career AP shares many characteristics with the UM, this individual exhibits a high degree of comfort in the job

role. The career principal is place bound and often gives priority to family and personal life, rather than spending the time a principal must devote to community involvement. This person has low to medium involvement in professional organizations, and greater involvement in and identification with the school site. Often the career AP has been offered but declined the opportunity to advance to a principalship.

The career AP is oriented to students, teachers and parents; he/she likes working with students and is highly respected. He/she is a key member of the administrative team, has good relations with the principal, and participates in decision-making at the school site. The career AP volunteers for meetings or assignments with district level administrators less frequently than the upwardly mobile candidate for whom visibility is crucial.

Often the career assistant principal has tried a range of challenging and interesting jobs or has other outside interests that are consuming in time and energy. He/she takes evident pride in the career position. (See Virgil Jones, p. 13.) The career AP feels that there is adequate financial remuneration to allow for a comfortable life. The career AP does not have to maintain a strong and continuing relationship with a sponsor or mentor.

The Plateaued Assistant Principal

The plateaued AP wants a promotion, has applied several times for a promotion to a principalship, but has been rebuffed. There may have been the perception of a promotional opportunity on this person's part, but in actuality none existed for this

individual. Plateaued persons often express dissatisfaction with the selection process or may be at odds with the district administration over issues of policy or policy enforcement. They may take positions or express opinions which indicate disloyalty to the prevailing values of the organization or its leadership, as we saw with Greenberg and Jameson. The position holds high frustration and high stress for the AP who may be disillusioned with superiors as role models.

Plateaued assistants generally lack strong mentor/sponsor relationship. They often lack the interpersonal skills necessary to promote good human relations.

Frequently in the career of the plateaued AP there is a record of a mistake that is visible that thwarts the upward career climb. Problems may have occurred in one or more areas in which competence must be demonstrated. Often problems occur in the role of politician in dealing with each constituency in the school community and with superiors, inability to handle discipline or the administrative role as an instructional evaluator.

Social errors, such as those outlined by Bosk (1977) in the areas of affability, dependability or availability, hurt the applicant's chances for promotion. A social error involves a mistake in relation to a particularly important person or group (e.g., failure to join a certain group, when asked, such as in Martin Jameson's case). This error can seriously hamper an individual's career advancement. The plateaued person frequently does not respond positively to criticism. After making errors or getting poor marks for performance, he/she may not have responded

to feedback and/or lacked the ability to adjust or to change dysfunctional patterns.

The plateaued state of the AP may also be a result of external forces. The number of higher positions may have been constricted in the school system, thereby, necessitating a wait or hold status. A plateaued AP may also be the wrong "type", not fitting the norm sought by the current administration to fill jobs higher in status. (For example, Jean King and Carol Mann were the wrong sex according to their superintendents.)

The AP can also become plateaued by applying for positions and being rejected. Schmitt and Schechtman (1990) in their review of research on the selection of school administrators report that very few aspirants are selected to fill a position on their first attempts. Many have to apply three or four times before obtaining a principalship. Thus, the personal and political responses to the application process affect the candidate's career chances. High frustration, stress, and disillusionment with superiors or with the selection process lower the plateaued AP's energy, motivation, and desire to move up. Lacking a strong mentor or sponsor, this person has no one to encourage, train, or to assist him/her in the promotion process. The plateaued AP may believe this state is temporary and that change will occur which will make promotion possible. Some plateaued APs will make conscious decisions to accept this status and opt to define themselves as career APs or look for ways to leave their school districts or the field of education.

The Shafted Assistant Principal

The major characteristic of the shafted AP is that the aspirant has capably and successfully met most of the criteria of the upwardly mobile but remains without a chance of promotion. Shafted APs are plateaued. There are two means by which a person may be shafted: (1) inappropriate placement, or (2) district changes that result in a reversal of the candidate's expectations.

The loss of a sponsor's guidance and commitment (due to retirement or upward mobility to another district) could leave an AP without guidance or powerful support. Where he/she once had powerful backing, now there is a vacuum at best, or, at worst, residual resentment from peers without the protection a sponsor affords.

Shafting can also occur when school district leadership or site leadership changes. The district's career pattern may have changed to meet new priorities, leaving the AP in a dead end situation. The candidate may fail to meet unstated expectations simply by being the wrong sex or having the wrong racial, ethnic background or age, according to district values or unspoken quotas. Elizabeth Anderson, for example, learned she would not be promoted while several Black males were being appointed at the time she was seeking a principalship. According to Ms. Anderson, her personal response to this knowledge resulted in stress that influenced her mental and physical health. This affected her attendance record, and she eventually dropped out of a doctoral program.

Being placed in a site without the needed preparation for its special demands may leave an AP shafted. Inappropriate placement can result from affirmative action programs which place women or minorities in settings in which they are unable to gain access to the same socialization processes as white males, to sponsors or to a network of peers (see Marshall, 1983, for further examples).

Finally, the shafted AP may have defied administrative values in visible ways when they conflicted with his/her own values. Martin Jameson, for example, would have been plateaued/shafted if he had remained in the Whitman School District. Because he understood the political situation, he knew he had to move to a new district and give himself a new chance.

Thus the shafted AP could have been a principal. He/she was on a UM track but lost out due to some circumstance not totally within the candidate's control. Movement to another district can change the candidate's prospects (as we saw with Jean King).

The Assistant Principal Who Considers Leaving

This assistant principal is young enough to develop an alternative career and may have other skills enabling him/her to enter another profession and earn more money. The candidate may have held positions outside the field of education that were at the same or higher management level than the assistant principalship. At this time in the career, the aspirant feels overqualified as an assistant principal and undervalued for his/her contribution. The undervaluing may include: exclusion from the administrative in-group, having no sponsor, lack of higher administrative support, not being rated as outstanding,

forced to do trivial administrative tasks, or having the responsibility for running some essential program without receiving credit for the job. This person feels he/she has been shafted.

This candidate is not place bound but feels promotion will be blocked within the district. Candidates also consider leaving due to health problems or the stress of the work.

In this research only male APs considered leaving. This is consistent with the Gross and Trask (1976) findings that many men who entered education did so after working in other career areas, thus giving them a work background that enabled them to change fields.

The Downwardly Mobile Administrator

This research project uncovered a reverse career orientation in some APs from principal to AP or to teacher or principal of a lower-level school. This discovery that the career path does not move in a single direction goes beyond the research project's original career socialization framework. Table 3 outlines the contexts in which downward mobility occurred. These reversals were both voluntary and involuntary. Involuntary reversals came for one of two reasons: (a) reduction in the administrative force due to declining enrollments in the district or to reorganization within the district which resulted in closed schools, or (b) demotion as a result of a mistake or a problem with the politician role of the principal or a changed balance in political roles in the district.

Voluntary reversals in position were requested by principals who had health problems and wanted to reduce the work stress and

work load or those who became disillusioned with the job and opted to return to a job assignment with tasks they preferred. These reversals were equally distributed by sex.

Downwardly mobile assistant principals were place bound and showed a strong family orientation. Those who voluntarily reversed career directions wanted to return to the familiar work of discipline or a close identity with students. They seemed to derive great satisfaction from being able to turn a youngster around (i.e., improve his behavior) or provide some important assistance to troubled students. One demoted principal who returned to the AP position had many of the attributes of the shafted AP with the change of district leadership being paramount.

Conclusions

Commitment to Career and Organization

Assistant principals develop orientations in response to the opportunity structures and the task activities they experience during their time in the position. Movement up the administrative career ladder involves a continual series of decisions and the making or grasping of opportunities as well as an understanding of timing. Upward mobility requires a commitment to one's career and to the organization. In the assistant principalship the individual has opportunity to demonstrate that commitment as well as the skills and attitudes he or she believes the district deems important. Interactions within the organization determine whether or not an aspirant fits within its goal structure and projects its image of a school administrator.

Analysis of the context details in the case studies reveals that each district and each school organization has its own norms and traditions. For example, unlike Doris Schroeder's district, East City, was known for its annual massive lay-offs of personnel to adjust to drops in pupil population. At that time it did not (perhaps could not) consider a restructuring of its school organizational system in order to save jobs. Each subject developed a response behavior to his/her district.

The school-site culture imposes uneven sets of conditions, restraints and possibilities on the aspirants. The working environment has a profound effect on the attitudes and aspirations of assistant principals. Ellen Carson and David Greenberg worked at school sites in East City, both were intellectually capable, incisive in seeing through to the major components of a problem and in devising solutions. Yet the nature of each work site due to differences in leadership, the community, academic levels, the client culture, the institutional support network and the adult responses to the work situation resulted in different outcomes in their orientations to their careers. Male and female APs also encounter different experiences within the same district or building. Each AP responds personally (from the depths of the individual's makeup) and contextually (from the interplay of site-level and organizational events) to this set of forces or career influences.

The principal is an insider who holds major control over the promotion process. Principals provide the resources for and access to training experiences in the school as well as access to

information sources and opportunities for visibility (Valverde, 1980; Mitchell, 1987). The relationship of the teacher aspirant and the AP to the principal is vitally important in the socialization process and in gaining support and sponsorship (Valverde 1980; Mitchell, 1987; Gross 1987).

Career timing and planning, the ability to define situations in which one can successfully take limited risks that will have positive career outcomes, and the personal drive and energy that permits one to spend the hours and take the risks are also major factors that promote or inhibit mobility.

When the positive aspects of these conditions (i.e., opportunity for promotion exists in the district, the candidate has the sponsorship of someone respected and/or powerful, the candidate has demonstrated mastery of a variety of tasks as well as the ability to remain calm in crisis) are present in conjunction with a candidate's desire for promotion, the model predicts that the aspirant should be upwardly mobile.

We see that not every assistant wants to move up the line ladder or will move up even if he/she aspires to do so. But not every AP has reached the professional authority and mutual acceptance between the self and the organization that Ralph Long and Virgil Jones felt in their positions. We see, too, the enormous frustration the individual feels as he/she comes up against an organization that plateaus or "shafts" the aspirant.

This typology provides a framework for viewing not only the career orientation of individual APs and the variety of factors that directly influence an aspirant's career within a school organization, but it also allows four major themes to emerge from

the data--the influence of the organization, the site level, the principal, and, of course, one's personal responses to these on the individual career as illustrated in Figure One.

The assistant principalship is a physically and emotionally demanding position that forces an individual to draw upon all the knowledge and intellectual resources in his/her repertoire (Austin & Brown, 1970; Greenfield, 1986; Iannaccone, 1985; Marshall, 1985). The end of the school day (and year) often leaves the AP with little concrete evidence of a task completed, both drained and unsatisfied that there was any lasting effect from her/his work. Yet, most principals and secondary schools could not function without the person who occupies this position. This research has explored the working lives of twenty APs, identified five career orientations, illustrating that the interactions between district and school site variables affect the formation of an orientation to the administrative career.

The typology was developed from context-filled case studies and can provide a basis for structuring recruitment, training, support, and selection practices for aspirants to administrative careers. As school districts plan for recruiting future school leaders, they can alter structures to support the preferred behaviors and values, provide opportunities for candidates to grow from their mistakes, and insure that all aspirants have access to the needed knowledge, skills and equitable basis. The typology can also serve an assessment tool for the individual who is making career choices and changes by helping to identify the organization's demands on and responses to their own values and behaviors.

Recommendations for Further Research

Schmitt and Schechtman (1990) verify the dearth of literature available on procedures for the selection of building administrators in our schools. Continued research on the socialization and selection of principals and assistant principals can help districts to refine the selection process, making administration more accessible to women and minorities, and to develop policies that support its middle level managers.

We believe that expansion of the number of case studies using field study methodology will help to form grounded theory of career adjustment. The development of grounded theory in this area has usefulness in helping individuals in educational careers to understand the demands on them when they desire to move into educational leadership/management. This research has documented that many assistant principals were appointed by upper level management and then allowed to sink or swim, often depending on site conditions and the acquisition of sponsorship as a district's socio-political climate would allow. If additional case studies corroborate the basic typology categories, the typology can be further refined into more precise categories. Comparison studies could show, then, how the careers of aspirants in other public service and private sectors relate to the model.

Footnotes

[1]It is generally accepted that line positions in school administration include the positions of: superintendent, assistant and associate superintendent, and principal. Staff positions include curriculum directors, supervisors and division heads. Administrators in line positions make policy and site-level decisions; those in staff positions have jurisdiction over an area of expertise or specialized knowledge rather than over many people (Ortiz, 1982; Marshall, 1979; Kanter, 1977).

[2]A typology is defined as a systematic classification or study of types, and it functions to identify a class that is distinguished by particular characteristics

[3]This could be predicted from reviews of previous research on women in administration (Ortiz & Marshall, 1988).

TABLE 1

SUBJECT DATA AND PLACEMENT WITHIN TYPOLOGY

Typology Category	Subject	Ongoing Sponsor	Years Tchng	District	Yrs As VP	Applied for Principalship	Goal	Sex	Ethnicity
P/S	Anderson	N	11	U	21	Y	Retire	F	B
P	Greenberg	N	13	U	4	Y	Principal	M	W
P[1]	Simpson	N	17	U	14	Y[3]	Retire	F	B
P[1]	Jones	N	11.6	U	3	N[3]	CO	F	B
P	DeVarona	N	9	U	13	Y[1]	Principal	F	W
P[4]	Russell	Y	10	U	13	N[1]	Principal	M	B
P[4]	Rhoades	Y	23	U	2	Y	Principal	F	W
UM[1,4]	Schroeder	N	13	S	3	N[2,6]	CO	F	W
UM	Jameson	Y*	5	R	3	Y[3]	Principal	M	W
UM[1]	Carson	Y	18	U	2	N	Principal	F	W
UM[1]	Clark	N	2+15	U	4	N	CO	F	W
UM[1]	Dixon	Y	13	R	2	N[2]	CO	F	W
UM	King	Y	6	R	10	Y[2]	Principal	F	B
UM	Mann	Y	24	R	12	Y[5]	Principal	F	W
UM	Rafferty	N	8	S	2.5	N	Principal	F	W
C	Jones	Y*	8	U	14	N	VP	M	B
C	Long	N	16	S	12	N	VP	M	W
C	Gibsen	Y	15	S	5	N	VP	F	B
C	Mize	N	12	S/R	10	N	VP	M	W
L/S	Tiempo	N	2	U	4	Y	Business	M	H

ABBREVIATIONS: P = Plateaued, UM = Upwardly Mobile, C = Career, S = Shafter, L = Considering Leaving, CO = Central Office, U = Urban, S = Suburban, R = Rural

*Sponsorship available if candidate chose to use it.

[1]Desired to move into staff position at district level.

[2]Successful applicant

[3]Expected to apply in next round of openings

[4]Problems indicated temporary plateauing within system

[5]Applied for and appointed principal after completion of the research

[6]Appointed superintendent after completion of the research

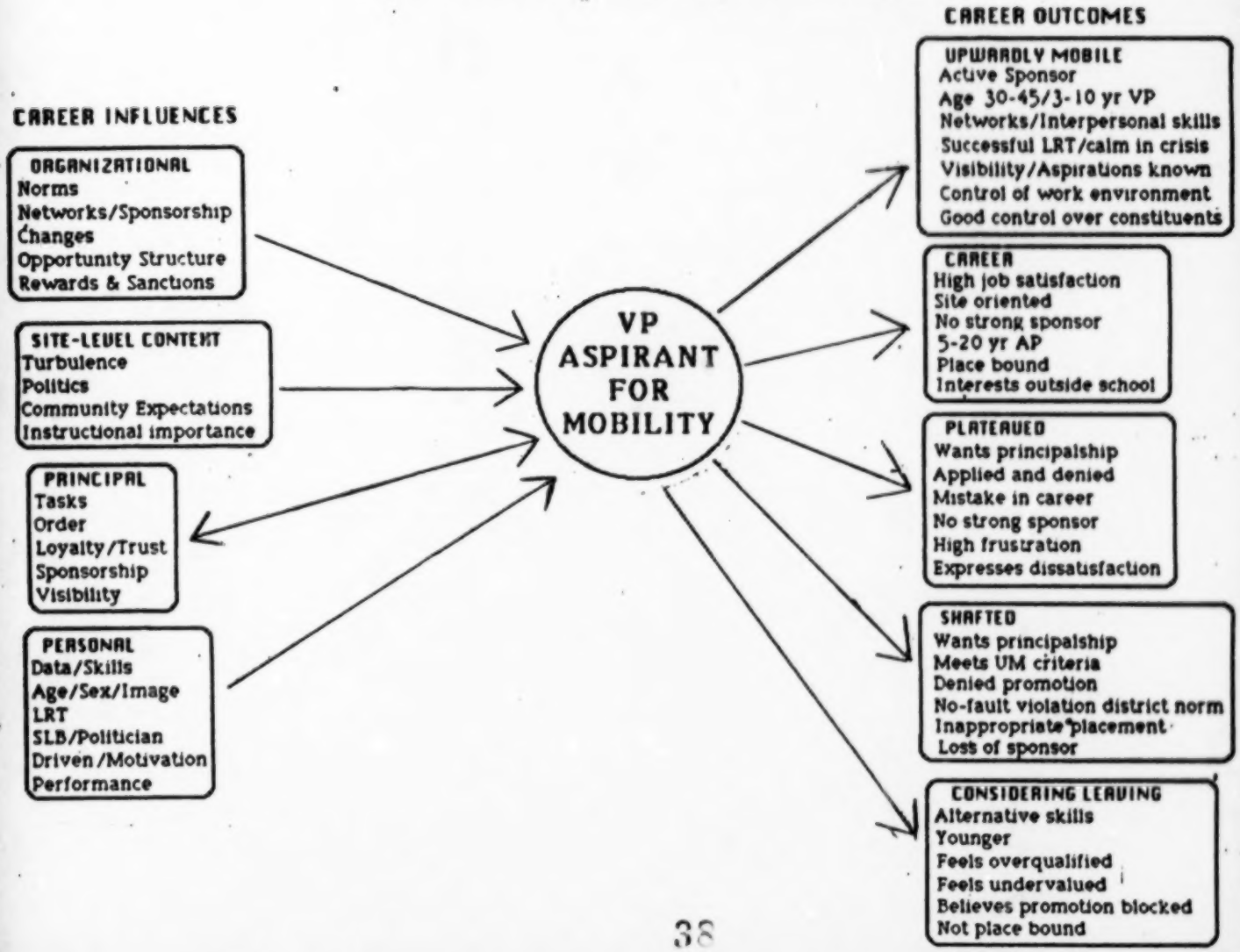
TABLE 2

Situations Creating the Downwardly Mobile Administrator

District	Sex	Situation
East City	F	AP is denied request to return to teaching for health reasons, takes health leave. District policy does not allow career reversals. Did not want middle school principalships.
Belleville	F	Two elementary school principals voluntarily return to teaching. Did not want middle school principalships.
Whitman	F	Middle school principal voluntarily returns to teaching.
	M	High school principal placed in middle school (involuntarily).
Upper Devon	M	High school principal voluntarily takes vice principal position in another high school for health reasons and time demands.
	M	Assistant superintendent for curriculum resigns to return to teaching.
	M	Director of Pupil Services resigns to return to teaching.
North	M	Colleague of Dr. Tiempo makes involuntary move from middle school principal to high school vice principal.

Figure One

ADMINISTRATIVE CAREER ADJUSTMENT MODEL



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